

LATARNIA

FANTASTIQUE INTERNATIONAL



Number 1

apresenta:

PAUL NASCHY
DANIELLE WINITS
EVANDRO MESQUITA
KARINA BACCHI



ACREDITE SE QUISER !!!

UM LOBISOMEM NA AMAZÔNIA

UM FILME DE IVAN CARDOSO O MESTRE DO TERROR

COM NUNO LEAL MAIA JOANA MEDEIROS TONY TORNADO DAIANE AMÉNDOLA GUARÁ

PEDRO NESCHLING DJIN GANZERLA BRUNO DE LUCCA ANALÍ SILVEIRA ORLANDO DRUMOND

PARTICIPAÇÃO ESPECIAL SIDNEY MAGAL

Uma adaptação livre do clássico "Amazônia Misteriosa" de Gastão Cruz. Roteiro: R. FLUCCETTI. Fotografia: JOSÉ GUERRA ABC. Montagem: JOÃO PAULO CARVALHO. Trilha Sonora: MÚ CARVALHO. Direção de Arte: PAULO FLAKSMAN. Casting: BIBELE SANTA CRUZ. Estúdio de som: MEIOAMÍDIA. Produção executiva: TELMO MAIA. Produção: TOPÁZIO FILMES LTDA/ OLIER ASSOCIADOS. Co-produção: LABOCINE. Apoio: QUANTA. Distribuição: POLIFILMES. Patrocínio: BR PETER.

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Latarnia: Fantastique International
Publisher/Editor: Mirek Lipinski
Layout: Latarnia Design Studios

Address: M. Lipinski, PO Box 2398, NY, NY 10009

Special thanks to Andres Resino, Jesus, Elena Romea, Louis Jimenez, Gloria Lillibridge, Rondo Hall of Famer Richard Klemensen, Gurgius Gewdner, One-Eyed Films and Brianna Wanlass

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Front cover: © Brianna Wanlass (Thank you very much!)

Inside front cover: Brazilian poster for Um lobisomem na Amazonia, Julio Shimamoto, Gurgius Gewdner

Inside back cover: Rosalba Neri from Slaughter Hotel

Back cover: Italian poster for Jess Franco's Der Todesrächer von Soho

Cinema is an adventure. It can inspire and embolden, sweeten or spice the days and the nights. It doesn't matter how high-brow or low-brow it is. The result can be the same: to experience something that makes us feel more alive, more curious, more eager, more passionate, and sometimes, conversely, more tranquil and at peace with ourselves and the world. Through cinema we taste the limitlessness of life, its intoxicating expansiveness, and our imagination is activated. We are undoubtedly the richer spiritually because of film. Not all film, certainly; maybe not the majority of film, but enough of film to create an enduring love and dedication toward this wonderful art form.

It may seem curious to address spirituality in a magazine dedicated, primarily, toward horror, fantasy and mystery films, but I can't think of any film of horror, fantasy or mystery that I've considered worth my time that has not made the experience of life more intense and satisfying, with, at times, lessons about life or myself learned somewhere along the way.

The start of a magazine is also an adventure. What subject matter will it cover? What will its editorial focus be? How long will it last? How will it develop? If it lasts just one issue, will that issue stand out as a noble journey both unique and fascinating, with a yearning in readers for continuation?

I'm not of the opinion that every magazine should be welcome, just those that provide something others do not. Hopefully you will find in these pages something that you've not seen or read in other magazines, something worth your time, so that you can take the journey along with Latarnia Fantastique International—now and into the future.

Mirek



Latarnia: Fantastique International - 3

AS THE
HORRIFYING NIGHTMARES OF A
THOUSAND FRIGHTENING DREAMS
IN ONE FRANK PICTURE SHOWN

MAD DOCTOR OF BLOOD

—AND—
BLOOD DEMON



The DEAD RETURN TO LIFE!
LIVING AND LISTING FOR RITABLE PLEASURE!



Lex Barker · Karin Dor · Christopher Lee

in

Die Schlangengrube und das Pendel



mit Karl Lange · Vladimir Medar
Christiane Rücker · Dieter Eppler

Regie: Harald Reinl
Herstellungsleitung: Erwin Gitt

Ein HARALD-REINL-FARBFILM
der CONSTANTIN FILM/BAVARIA-ATLANTA GAMES
Constantin-Film



Die Schlangengrube und das Pendel



Die Schlangengrube und das Pendel



Lex Barker · Karin Dor · Christopher Lee

Karl Lange · Vladimir Medar
Christiane Rücker · Dieter Eppler

Regie: Harald Reinl

Drehbuch: Manfred R. Köster
nach Motiven von Edgar Allan Poe
Bild: Ernst W. Kallies
Musik: Peter Thomas
Produktionsleitung:
Wolfgang Schölkens

Die Schlangengrube und das Pendel

Herstellungsleitung: Erwin Gitt Ein HARALD-REINL-FARBFILM der CONSTANTIN FILM/BAVARIA-ATLANTA GAMES Constantin-Film

The Torture Chamber of Dr. Sadism

THE START OF A HORROR SERIES
THAT NEVER WAS

by Mirek Lipinski

Germany can be considered in many ways the spiritual home of Gothic Horror. Its literary tradition influenced Matthew Lewis, Mary Shelley, Edgar Allan Poe and other titans in fantastique literature. The Romantics looked to that country's art, landscape and architecture for inspiration and as a source for their melancholic Gothic dreams. In the silent film era, Germany responded forcefully to its rich Schauer-Romantik past with bizarre supernatural tales that influenced horror films thereafter, most notably those featuring Universal's classic monsters, some of whom spent cinematic time in fictitious Bavarian locales and villages, as did several of the creatures and evil barons that would populate England's "House of Horror" Hammer Films in later years. Curious then, how lacking was the production of the Gothic horror film in Germany (or, to be more exact, West Germany at that point in a divided nation) during cinema's golden period of Gothic horror in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Advance several years to 1967. *Die Schlangengrube und das Pendel* (literal English translation: *The Snake Pit and the Pendulum*) is a rarity in this regard, an ambitious film that was planned by the production firm Constantin Film as the first in a series of Gothic and gruesome horrors that would stand side-by-side with the popularity and success of West Germany's Edgar Wallace krimis and Karl May westerns, and rival the international successes of Roger Corman's Edgar Allan Poe films.

Harald Reinl was the obvious choice to direct this projected first in



a series of Gothic horror films. Born in Bad Ischl, Austria-Hungary, on July 9, 1908, a talented assistant of Leni Riefenstahl during the war years,



Reinl had already secured a name for himself by 1967 as West Germany's most popular and successful director. Reinl had directed the first post-war Edgar Wallace krimi for Rialto and Constantin Film in 1959, *Der Frosch mit der Maske* (*The Fellowship of the Frog*), and three years later, the first Karl May western, *Der Schatz im Silbersee* (*The Treasure of Silver Lake*). Both films set in motion two highly successful series. In 1967 Reinl was coming off directing his greatest challenge, a two-part version of Germany's colorful, mythological classic, *Nibelungen*. Clearly, if anyone could initiate a new series and make it an international success, it was Reinl.

West Germany's most popular American actor abroad, Lex Barker, was a natural for the protagonist role of Roger Mont Elise. A former Tarzan, Barker had achieved impressive success in West Germany's Karl May westerns and adventure films. His fine Aryan features were particularly suited to represent the ideal German male, and his striking good looks and blue eyes (and possibly his frequent high-profile marriages) earned him the nickname "Sexy Lexy" among his German fans.

The female lead was predictable, but not unwelcome. Actress Karin Dor ("Miss Krimi") had been Harald Reinl's wife since 1954, marrying him when she was eighteen and he twenty-eight years her senior. A sympathetic and certainly lovely on-screen presence, Dor would soon achieve greater renown in a villainess role as Helga Brandt in the James Bond epic, *You Only Live Twice* (1967).

As the premier international horror star of his time, Christopher Lee was an imperative choice for the role of the resurrected Count Regula, a name clearly meant to call to mind the other count Lee

was best known for playing since 1958. Lee's crucial presence would lend the film gravitas and entice horror film fan interest worldwide. Besides, Lee was fluent in German and had already worked in West Germany on a couple of krimis and a Sherlock Holmes movie; and the Fu Manchu films he starred in during this time were partially financed by the Germans. Lee had even tested for the role of the heroic Winnetou in the Karl May series. As Vincent Price was the face of the American International Poe films, Christopher Lee was being tailored to become the face of the hoped-for series of gruesome Gothic horrors from Constantin.

Rounding out the main cast were two fine German character actors, Carl Lange and Dieter Eppler, the Croatian actor Vladimir Medar, and Christiane Rucker. Composer Peter Thomas, whose jazzy, at times experimental music was an important, frisky element in many krimis, would employ kinetic and eerie tones for his individualistic take on Gothic Romanticism, with a bit of disconcerting jaunty music during carriage rides through the countryside. (In a couple of scenes different cues were used for export versions. Unlike the German version, the English-language dub does not contain music during the beginning credits.) Manfred R. Kohler adopted, very liberally, Poe's 1842 classic short story, "The Pit and the Pendulum," which had been successfully filmed by Roger Corman six years earlier, while the surrealist Gabriel Pellon was charged with set design and the paintings that would appear in the film.



An initial draft of the script, worked on also by Reinl and Constantin production chief Manfred Barthel, was titled *Die Schlängengrube und das Pendel* (*The Water Pit and the Pendulum*). According to research done by film historian Joachim Kramp, this version dif-

fered in several points from the final script used for the shoot. After the evil Count Regula is quartered in the town square, his body parts are picked up by Anatol, a travelling mountebank, who carts them away from the town square. The scene then changes to Paris at a future date, where the Lex Barker character, Roger Mont Elise, receives an invitation from Count Regula to his castle in Serbia. At the end of the film, only Roger and Lilian (Karin Dor) survive. Lilian's servant, Babette (Christiane Rucker), has met some gruesome death, while the braggart and bandit Fabian (Vladimir Medar) is crushed by stones falling from the crumbling castle. A revised script gave the film a complete happy ending.

As it is, the core story remained the same. In the prologue Count Frederick Regula is quartered in the town square for crimes against twelve virgins, but before this gruesome execution happens he curses the house of Reinhard von Marienberg, his judge (also played by Barker). Thirty-five years later, in another land, a letter is handed to Roger Mont Elise, inviting him to visit Count Regula in Andomai, where the count will relate facts of Roger's true

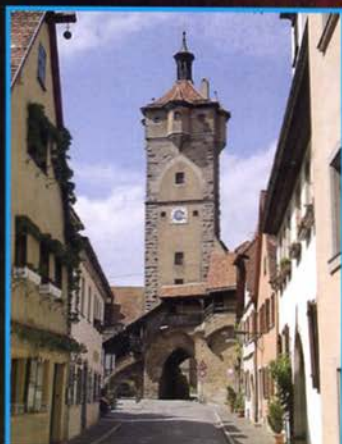


The Lovely Town of Rothenburg

Once you have seen *Die Schlängengrube und das Pendel*, you will forever have the town of Rothenburg imprinted in your dreams. Situated in what is the Bavarian section of Germany, this medieval town is a popular tourist destination due to its architecture and splendid preservation. Much of the town is car free, rendering a trip back into time that much more impacting and appealing. Rothenburg is positioned on a plateau overlooking the Tauber River, hence the full name of the place is "Rothenburg ob der Tauber."

19th century Romantics gave impetus to turning the town into a tourist mecca. Realizing the value, even back then, the town passed laws to head off any significant changes that would mar its history and charming look.

The Second World War brought some devastation to Rothenburg, with Allied bombings destroying 306 houses, six public buildings and nine watchtowers, and a portion of the wall that encircles the town. Rothenburg was saved from further destruction when the U.S. Army was ordered not to use artillery in taking the town, and the German military commander, ignoring Hitler's orders, abandoned the town rather than see it succumb to the ravages of battle. Donations from around the world restored Rothenburg, so that it now exists as a mecca for the Romantics of our time.



ancestry, which Roger has been unaware of since birth. Eager to uncover his real identity, Roger makes the journey, along the way meeting up with Lilian von Brabant, who, likewise with an invite from Count Regula, is on the way to Andomai to take possession of inherited land. (Unbeknownst to Lilian, her mother had been a key witness against Count Regula, having escaped his clutches thirty-five years ago.) Lilian is accompanied by her servant Babette, and complimenting the threesome is Fabian, who first appears as a priest, but is soon revealed to be a bandit. The group goes through various weird adventures before reaching the castle and even more when they are inside the castle, which turns out to be a residence of tortures, madness and the macabre, with Count Regula rising from some damned suspended animation to continue his mission of realizing eternal life through a secret serum that needs the blood of a tormented thirteenth virgin—Lilian von Brabant.

Filming began on May 16, 1967, with exteriors helmed at Isar Valley and the towns of Detmold and the enchantingly medieval Rothenburg ob der Tauber, which contains "the most photographed street in all of Germany," overlooked by the landmark Siebers Tower. Interior work was done at Bavaria Studios, where Christopher Lee joined the production in mid-June, unsure of the film's possible merits.

"I really have no idea whether this film will ever be shown outside Europe and it is just possible that this might be an advantage," he wrote to the then-president of his fan club, Gloria Lillibridge, on June 17, a couple of days before leaving for Munich.

At various times the filming was witnessed by an invited press and, on location, by crowds eager to see, and get an autograph from, "Sexy Lexy" and the other better-known cast members.

The press was delightfully surprised by the live hoarding of vultures, snakes, scorpions and spiders to be found in the awe-inspiring sets built for the film at Bavaria Studios. They commented on the good-natured humor during the shoot.

When a strapped-down Lex Barker brushed off the suggestion that he might be afraid of lying bound under a pendulum, Harald Reinl added mischievously to spark some fear in the nonchalant actor, "We're letting in the rats now!"

Reinl kept his focus on what he considered a good horror film to be: the progressive presentation of fresh situations and surprises. "New effects have to be always added to fill the public with corresponding fear," he commented. A mishap occurred during the filming of a carriage ride when cameraman Ernst W. Kalinke broke his arm, but he was back to work, arm in plaster, two weeks later.

Otherwise, the shoot was efficient and relations certainly friendly. The German ensemble of actors had worked together before, and Barker and Lee had known each other earlier in their careers and rekindled their friendship. Filming ended on July 7, 1967.

After his return to England, Christopher Lee wrote to Gloria Lillibridge on July 22: "I much enjoyed my stay in Munich and was pleasantly surprised at what I saw of the film in the projection. The colour is superb, the sets are excellent and the acting more than adequate.

So it may not be quite so ineffective as I feared." In an interview near the end of her life, Karin Dor confirmed Lee's feelings at the time: "Christopher Lee very gladly made the film and had no problems with his part."



Die Schlangengrube und das Pendel premiered on October 5, 1967. The film achieved success in West Germany, eventually attracting 1.6 million patrons, and was exhibited theatrically in that country even into the 1970s. Despite this, Constantin did not proceed with their projected series of Gothic horror films. In the United States, the most lucrative market for horror films, *Die Schlangengrube und das Pendel* was undersold to Hemisphere Pictures, dismissively appearing in 1969 under the title *The Blood Demon* as a bottom double-bill programmer (to *Mad Doctor of Blood Island*) in exploitation venues that underlined the film's ghettoization. It resurfaced with more impacting results in local Chiller Theatre-type television programming and video releases, and became best known under the lurid title *The Torture Chamber of Dr. Sadism* (though the print using this title leaves out "the"). The film is also remembered under the title *Castle of the Walking Dead*, confusing many fans who had to contend with other "Castle"-titled films starring Christopher Lee, like *Castle of the Living Dead* and *Horror Castle*. The original German title was felt too weak for exploitation markets around the world, so, as with the United States, international distributors made up their own

titles. In Italy, for example, the film is titled *La tredicesima vergine* (*The Thirteenth Virgin*), in France, *Le Vampire et le Sang des Vierges* (*The Vampire and the Blood of Virgins*).

In retrospect, the failure of *Die Schlangengrube und das Pendel* to initiate a new German horror series was understandable, as the film appeared after the end of the Gothic Horror boom. In the United States, Roger Corman, whose work had been the inspiration behind *Die Schlangengrube und das Pendel*, had left the world of Edgar Allan Poe three years earlier, and in Italy the fascination for Gothic horrors had been supplanted by an impassioned interest in Spaghetti Westerns and, later, the slick giallo film. Only Spain and England's Hammer Films still mined Gothic territory with some manner of dedication—though, tellingly, Hammer would place Lee's Dracula solidly in a very modern London in his last two Dracula films for the company a few years later. With exceptions, such as the exploitation Gothics of Adrian Hoven (*Im Schloss der blutigen Begierde*/ *Castle of the Creeping Flesh*, *Hexen bis aufs Blut gequält*/ *The Mark of the Devil*), West Germany would become content with co-production deals with other European countries for its horror film output.

Perhaps wishing to distance himself sternly from his horror past, Christopher Lee had an unfortunate change of heart over *Die Schlangengrube und das Pendel* in his autobiography, *Tall, Dark and Gruesome* (US printing: 1999), calling the film "a perfectly dreadful composite of *The House of Legends*, *Eternal Life*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *The Pit and the Pendulum*." One wonders if he ever saw the finished product to hold such an opinion. Or, perhaps, there was a more self-centered reason for such a remark. *Die Schlangengrube und das Pendel* is not an actor's film, after all. The actor is fairly unimportant here, except as a plot mover and movable decoration in the chilling fairytale being told, though Carl Lange and Vladimir Medar manage to impress in delicious roles, the former appearing in several prankish disguises. It is perhaps the actor's lower status in this film that informs Christopher Lee's dismissal of it, particularly as Lee himself is called upon to do nothing much more than be a clichéd ominous presence, an irritation with Lee since the *Dracula* sequels.

But, in truth, the finished product is a unique joy, a film of continual visual enchantments and surprises of fantastic incident, emboldened throughout by a robust spirit of mystery and adventure, and employing to splendid effect vivid locales and wonderfully weird set design, the latter courtesy of Gabriel Pellon, whose work on the film has to be particularly lauded. Just as the Romantic paintings of moon-kissed travelers, Gothic architecture, shadowy woods and wild mountains nourished and inspired many in the early 19th century, *Die Schlangengrube und das Pendel* invites the viewer to relish and meditate upon the visual abundance on display, a rich Gothic phantasmagoria of ruins, mists, apparitions, skulls, foreboding forests, melancholic horizons, dark castle interiors—and all this in a world where architecture doesn't overwhelm but compliments nature's devilish mysteries and

sacred beauty—a world part Hoffmann, part Radcliffe, with a dose of Poe and the surrealistically bizarre.

Not strange, then, that those who have seen *Die Schlangengrube und das Pendel* in their youth, primarily on television, remember the film well and cherish it with a fondness that few horror films can engender. The film still speaks to dreamers and touches something primal in souls that are not that different from the Romantic souls alive two centuries ago. Fears are turned into fairy tales, mundane living is transformed into a thrilling quest for glamorous identity. Awe and wonder are awakened, the senses stimulated. And in the end, evil and danger are vanquished by comrades and loved ones. A sweet, calming sleep follows. The bogeyman has gone. All is right with the world and ourselves.

Special thanks to Gloria Lillibridge and Richard Klemensen.



Naked Blow-Up Dolls and Mannequin Body Parts

One of the more notorious backgrounds for any horror film up to the end of the 1960s was the diorama of female victims of Count Regula that filled the chamber in *Der Schlangengrube und das Pendel*. "Live" actresses were used, as well as blow-up dolls and casts of body parts. Probably thought too gruesome, some of these effects never made it to the final film.



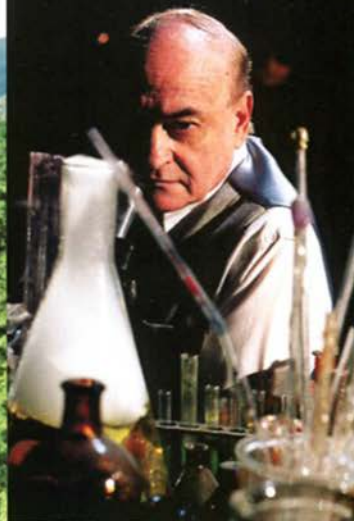
GABRIEL PELLON GALLERY

Gabriel Pellon (1900-1975)

Born in France, December 10th, 1900, the surrealist painter Gabriel Pellon became a long-time German art director and production designer for numerous films, beginning in 1927 with William Dieterle's *Das Schweigen im Walde* (The Silence in the Forest). Some of his genre work include *Der Greifer* (The Ripper, 1958) and *Die unsichtbaren Krallen des Dr. Mabuse* (The Invisible Dr. Mabuse, 1962). Die Schlangengrube und das Pendel gave him a unique opportunity to display his artistic talent, which included not only prominent "murals from hell," but bizarre sculpture, too. (See bottom left.)



Naschy's Final Double Role — Dr. Moreau and the Wolf Man!



At age 70, the legendary horror star donned werewolf make-up once again for Ivan Cardoso's *Werewolf in the Amazon*. Almost impossible to see, this is an exclusive first review of the film....



Ivan Cardoso's *WEREWOLF IN THE AMAZON* (UM LOBISOMEM NA AMAZONIA) has been a holy (or shall we say, evil) grail since its completion in 2005. Aside from a couple of

showings at film festivals, where the critical reaction was not good, the film has not been seen, nor much heard of—this despite the return of the legendary Paul Naschy to a werewolf role, the burgeoning excitement at the time over the Benicio del Toro *THE WOLF-MAN* (which, one assumed, would have been a perfect “in” for any competing werewolf film), and the relative cult status of Brazilian director Ivan Cardoso. I tried to get a screener for the longest time, sending off correspondence to everyone I could think of, Naschy included. Finally, my efforts were answered, with maybe a bit of luck that I asked (again) the film’s international distributor, One-Eyed Films, at a suitably receptive time. I soon had a copy of the film, on DVD-R, in my hands.

My main trepidation as a slipped the disc into my player and sat down to watch the film was the memory of Naschy’s two previous werewolf outings: *LICANTROPO* (1996) where the director Francisco Gordillo ruined Naschy’s vision with unwarranted excisions, and *THE TOMB OF THE WEREWOLF* (2003), with its embarrassing California soft-core porn feel and acting, so at odds with the ethos and atmospheric resonance of a European Naschy film. The hope weaving through my concern was that the Cardoso film could not be as bad as those two. Surely not.

As the film began, I relaxed—and smiled my satisfaction. Any Naschy film, I thought, that starts with a reasonably well-directed

werewolf attack and follows that with a shower scene in which the camera luxuriantly travels over a young female’s soapy breasts is headed in the right direction and already miles ahead of Naschy’s two previous wolfman efforts. I smiled frequently thereafter, both amused at what I was seeing (yes, this is an entertaining film) and content that Naschy had finally wound up in a werewolf film that, while certainly nowhere comparable to Naschy’s classic wolfman films, at least had a viable measure of gusto and originality to make it a welcome addition to his filmography. Besides, Naschy was continuing his monster dominance of playing a variety of horror characters by adding H.G. Wells’ Dr. Moreau to a resume that includes a werewolf (of course), Dracula, a hunchback, a mummy, etc. And, in a record that may never be broken by any other actor, he has played a werewolf on film in three different countries: Spain, the United States (the aforementioned *TOMB OF THE WEREWOLF*), and Brazil.

The setup is fairly simple and one we’ve seen many times before: a group of young people (to naturally include a few sexy ladies) journey into a region where lives will be lost and romances kindled. This time, deep in the Amazonian jungle on a search for a hallucinogenic plant, they come



Any Naschy film that has the man bedding one of the lead femmes has to be a good film.



across savage werewolf attacks and the hideaway of Dr. Moreau (Naschy), the Dr. Moreau of H.G. Wells' *THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU* fame, who is continuing his experiments on man and animal in mysterious Brazil. What pumps this story up with originality is the temperament and style of Ivan Cardoso, who was promoted at the beginning of his career as Mojica ("Coffin Joe") Marin's protégé. Cardoso is the founder of a particular style of quirky horror-comedy called, in Brazil, "terrific." It's not *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN* and it's not *YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN*. It can be witty and earthy and absurd and bizarre, and sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn't. But when it doesn't work, something else quickly takes its place, and the earlier transgression is forgotten.

The cast and acting are very good all around. There's Naschy, of course, the legend smoothly executing his part and donning the werewolf make-up once again at age 70—and looking good! (A double appears to have been used in the more physically demanding scenes, however.) Nuno Leal Maia, as Professor Scott Corman, is a particular amusing standout, repeating "Oh, my God!" in English whenever he comes across a shocking scene or a beautiful lady. The sex scene between him and the Amazon queen, played with saucy earthiness by Joana Medeiros, is riotously funny.

Naschy speaks in Spanish in the film, while the other actors speak Portuguese. English subtitles were available on my screener. There's little chance this film will ever have an English audio track, which is only a problem to those who hate subtitles.

With its short running time of 72 minutes, packed with continual mindless fun entertainment, *WEREWOLF IN THE AMAZON* re-

minded me most of a 1950s' double bill programmer, this despite the nudity on display. Theatrically, *WEREWOLF IN THE AMAZON* would be a difficult film to market these days, as its sensibility is so distant from the predictable high-tech directing, editing and music scoring currently in vogue. *WEREWOLF IN THE AMAZON* would be best served in the smaller venue of cable television and certainly DVD, where a pairing with another Cardoso film, say, *THE SEVEN VAMPIRES*, would be most attractive to the consumer. Naschy fans, of course, only need the single Naschy film to tantalize them for a sale. — Mirek Lipinski

Werewolf in the Amazon (Um Lobisomem na Amazonia). D: Ivan Cardoso. S: Gastao Cruls, Rubens Francisco Luchetti. P: Jose Guerra. M: Mu Carvalho. C: Paul Naschy, Daiana Amendola, Karina Bacchi, Nuno Leal Maia, Bruno de Lucca, Tania Boscoli.



In a make-up chair, a rather glum looking Paul Naschy casts a glance at *Werewolf of the Amazon* director, Ivan Cardoso.

SPIRIT MOUNTAIN

GUSTAVO ADOLFO BECQUER

THE STORY THAT INSPIRED THE BLIND DEAD MOVIES

TRANSLATED BY CORNELIA FRANCES BATES AND KATHERINE LEE BATES

CORRECTED AND REVISED BY MIREK LIPINSKI

GUSTAVO ADOLFO BECQUER (1836-1870), POET AND SHORT STORY WRITER, IS SPAIN'S GREATEST LITERARY EXPONENT OF THE MACABRE. AFTER HIS DEATH, HIS STORIES WERE COLLECTED AS *LEYENDAS* (LEGENDS) AND FREQUENTLY PUBLISHED ALONG WITH HIS POETRY. BOTH STORIES AND POETRY ARE NOW CONSIDERED CLASSICS OF SPANISH LITERATURE. DIRECTOR AND SCREENWRITER AMANDO DE OSSORIO DREW INSPIRATION FROM BECQUER—PARTICULARLY "SPIRIT MOUNTAIN" (SPANISH TITLE: *EL MONTE DE LAS ANIMAS*)—FOR THE CREATION OF HIS KNIGHTS TEMPLAR "BLIND DEAD" FILMS. BECQUER'S STORY FIRST APPEARED IN PRINT IN THE DECEMBER 7, 1861 EDITION OF *EL CONTEMPORANEO*, A PUBLICATION TO WHICH HE CONTRIBUTED. THIS SLIGHTLY REVISED TRANSLATION INCLUDES MATERIAL USUALLY LEFT OUT.



On All Souls' Night, I was awakened at an unknown hour by the knell of bells. Their monotonous and endless tolling brought to mind a legend that I heard not too long ago in Soria.

I tried to fall back asleep. Impossible! Once prodded, the imagination is a horse that runs wild and cannot be reined in. To pass the time, I decided to write the story down, and indeed I did.

At twelve noon, after the consumption of a good lunch, and with an after-meal cigar for accompaniment, this won't have much of an effect on the readership of *El Contemporáneo*. But I heard it in the very place where it originated and, as I wrote, I sometimes glanced behind me with sudden fear, when, smitten by the cold night air, the window of my balcony would crack.

Make of it what you will; here it goes, like the mounted horseman in a Spanish pack of cards.

I

"Leash the dogs! Blow the horns to call the hunters together, and let us return to the city. Nighttime approaches, today is All Saints' Day, and we are on Spirit Mountain."

"So soon!"

"Were it any day but this, I would not give up until I had made an end of that pack of wolves that the snows of the Moncayo have driven from their dens; but today it is impossible. Very soon the Angelus will sound in the monastery of the Knights Templar, and the souls of the dead will commence to toll their bell in the chapel on the mountain."

"In that ruined chapel! Bah! Do you want to frighten me?"

"No, my fair cousin. You are not aware of all that happens hereabout, for it is not yet a year since you came here from distant parts. Rein in your mare; I will keep mine at the same pace and tell you this story along the way."

The pages gathered together in merry, boisterous groups. The Counts of Borges and Alcludiel mounted their noble steeds, and the whole company followed after the son and daughter of those

great houses, Alonso and Beatriz, who rode at some little distance in advance of the company.

As they proceeded, Alonso related in these words the promised story:

"This mountain, which is now called Spirit Mountain, belonged to the Knights Templar, whose monastery you see there on the river bank. The Templars were both monks and warriors. After Soria had been wrested from the Moors, the King summoned the Templars here from foreign lands to defend the city on the side next to the bridge, thus giving deep offense to his Castilian nobles, who, as they had won Soria alone, would alone have been able to defend it.

"Between the knights of the new and powerful Order and the nobles of the city there fermented for some years an animosity that finally developed into a deadly hatred. The Templars claimed this mountain for their own, where they reserved an abundance of game to satisfy their needs and contribute to their pleasures; the nobles determined to organize a great hunt within the bounds notwithstanding the strict prohibitions of 'the clergy with spurs,' as their enemies called them.

"The news of the projected invasion spread fast, and nothing availed to check the rage for the hunt on the one side, and the determination to break it up on the other. The proposed expedition came off. The wild beasts did not remember it; but it was never to be forgotten by the many mothers mourning for their sons. That was not a hunting-trip, but a frightful battle; the mountain was strewn with corpses, and the wolves, whose extermination was the goal, had a bloody feast. Finally the authority of the King was brought to bear. The mountain, the cursed occasion of so much misfortune, was declared abandoned, and the chapel of the Templars, situated on this same mountain, friends and enemies buried together in its cloister, began to fall into ruins.

"They say that ever since, on All Souls' Night, the chapel bell is heard tolling all alone, and the spirits of the dead, wrapped in the tatters of their shrouds, run as in a fantastic chase through the bushes and brambles. The deer trumpet in terror, wolves howl,

snakes hiss horribly, and on the following morning there have been seen clearly marked in the snow the prints of the fleshless feet of skeletons. This is why in Soria we call it Spirit Mountain, and this is why I wished to leave it before nightfall."

Alonso's story was finished just as the two young people arrived at the end of the bridge that admits to the city from that side. There they waited for the rest of the company to join them, and then the whole cavalcade was lost to sight in the dim and narrow streets of Soria.

II

The servants had just cleared the tables; the high Gothic fireplace of the palace of the Counts of Alcudiel was shedding a lively glow over the groups of lords and ladies who were chatting in friendly fashion, gathered about the blaze; and the wind shook the leaded glass of the ogive windows.

Only two persons seemed to hold aloof from the general conversation – Beatriz and Alonso. Beatriz, absorbed in a vague reverie, followed with her eyes the capricious dance of the flames. Alonso watched the reflection of the fire sparkling in the blue eyes of Beatriz.

Both maintained for some time a profound silence.

The duennas were telling gruesome stories, appropriate to the Night of All Souls – stories in which ghosts and spectres played the principal roles – and the church bells of Soria were tolling in the distance with a monotonous and mournful sound.

"Fair cousin," finally exclaimed Alonso, breaking the long silence between them. "Soon we are to be separated, perhaps forever. I know you do not like the arid plains of Castile, its rough, soldier customs, its simple, patriarchal ways. At various times I have heard you sigh, perhaps for some *gallant* in your far-away domain."

Beatriz made a gesture of cold indifference; the whole character of the woman was revealed in that disdainful contraction of her delicate lips.

"Or perhaps for the pomp of the French Court, where you lived beforehand," the young man hastened to add. "In one way or another, I foresee that I shall lose you soon. When we part, I would like to have you carry a remembrance of me.... Do you recollect the time when we went to church to give thanks to God for having granted you that restoration to health, which was your object in coming to this region? The jewel that fastened the plume of my cap attracted your attention. How well it would look clasping a veil over your dark hair! It has already been the adornment of a bride. My father gave it to my mother, and she wore it to the altar.... Would you like it?"

"I do not know how it is in your part of the country," replied the beauty, "but in mine to accept a gift is to incur an obligation. Only on a holy day may one receive a present from a kinsman – though he may go to Rome without returning empty-handed."

The frigid tone in which Beatriz spoke these words troubled the youth for a moment, but, calming down, he replied sadly:

"I know it, cousin, but today is the festival of All Saints – yours among all; today is a day of ceremonies and gifts. Will you accept mine?"

Beatriz bit her lip slightly and put out her hand for the jewel, without a word.

The two again fell silent and again heard the quavering voices of the old women telling of witches and hobgoblins, the whistling

wind that shook the ogive windows, and the mournful, monotonous tolling of the bells.

After the lapse of several minutes, the interrupted dialogue was thus renewed:

"And before All Saints' Day ends, which is holy to my saint as well as to yours, so that you can, without compromising yourself, give me a keepsake, will you not do so?" pleaded Alonso, fixing his eyes on his cousin's, which flashed like lightning, gleaming with a diabolical thought.

"Why not?" she exclaimed, raising her hand to her right shoulder as though seeking for something amid the fold of her wide velvet sleeve embroidered with gold. Then, with an innocent air of disappointment, she added:

"Do you recollect the blue scarf I wore to-day to the hunt, the scarf which you said, because of something about the meaning of its color, was the emblem of your soul?"

"Yes."

"Well! it is lost! It is lost, and I was thinking of letting you have it for a souvenir."

"Lost! where?" asked Alonso, rising from his seat with an indescribable expression of mingled fear and hope.

"I do not know – perhaps on the mountain."

"On Spirit Mountain!" he murmured, paling and sinking back into his seat. "On Spirit Mountain!"

Then he went on in a voice choked and broken:

"You know, for you have heard it a thousand times, that I am called in the city, in all Castile, the king of the hunters. Not having yet had a chance to try, like my ancestors, my strength in battle, I have brought to bear on this pastime, the image of war, all the energy of my youth, all the hereditary ardor of my race. The rugs your feet tread on are the spoils of the chase, the hides of the wild beasts I have killed with my own hand. I know their haunts and their habits; I have fought them by day and by night, on foot and on horseback, alone and with hunting-parties, and there is not a man will say that he has ever seen me shrink from danger. On any other night I would fly for that scarf, fly as joyously as to a festival; but tonight, this one night.... Why hide it? I am afraid. Do you hear? The bells are tolling, the Angelus has sounded in San Juan del Duero, the ghosts of the mountain are now beginning to lift their yellowing skulls from amid the brambles that cover their graves – the ghosts! the mere sight of them is enough to curdle with horror the blood of the bravest, turn his hair white, or sweep him away in the stormy whirl of their fantastic chase as a leaf, unwitting whither, is carried by the wind."

While the young man was speaking, an almost imperceptible smile curled the lips of Beatriz, who, when he had ceased, exclaimed in an indifferent tone, while she was stirring the fire on the hearth, where the wood blazed and snapped, throwing off sparks of a thousand colors:

"Oh, by no means! What madness! To go to the mountain at this hour for such a trifle! On such a dark night, on All Souls' Night, with the road beset by wolves!"

As she spoke this closing phrase, she emphasized it with so peculiar an intonation that Alonso could not fail to understand all her bitter irony. As moved by a spring, he leapt to his feet, passed his hand over his brow as if to dispel the fear which was in his brain, not in his breast, and with firm voice he said, addressing his beautiful cousin, who was still leaning over the hearth, amusing herself by stirring the fire:

"Farewell, Beatriz, farewell. I will return soon."

"Alonso, Alonso!" she called, turning quickly, but now that she wished – or made show of wishing – to detain him, the youth had gone.

In a few moments she heard the beat of a horse's hoofs departing at a gallop. The beauty, with a radiant expression of satisfied pride flushing her cheeks, listened attentively to the sound which grew fainter and fainter until it died away.

The old dames, meanwhile, where continuing their tales of ghostly apparitions; the wind was shrilling against the balcony glass, and far away the bells of the city tolled on.

III

An hour had passed, two, three; midnight would soon be striking, and Beatriz withdrew to her chamber. Alonso had not returned; he had not returned, though less than an hour would have sufficed for his errand.

"He must have been afraid!" exclaimed the girl, closing her prayer-book and turning toward her bed after a vain attempt to murmur some of the prayers that the church offers for the dead on the Day of All Souls.

After putting out her light and drawing the double silken curtains, she fell asleep; but her sleep was restless, light, uneasy.

The Postigo clock struck midnight. Beatriz heard through her dreams the slow, dull, melancholy strokes, and half opened her eyes. She thought she had heard, at the same time, her name spoken, but far, far away, and in a faint suffering voice. The wind groaned outside her window.

"It must have been the wind," she said, and pressing her hand above her heart, she strove to calm herself.

But her heart beat ever more wildly. The larchwood doors of the chamber grated on their hinges with a sharp creak, prolonged and strident.

First these doors, then the more distant ones – all the doors which led to her room opened, one after another, some with a heavy, groaning sound, some with a long wail that set the nerves on edge. Then silence, a silence full of strange rumors, the silence of midnight, the distant barking of dogs, confused voices, unintelligible words, echoes of footsteps going and coming, the rustle of trailing garments half-suppressed sighs, labored breathing almost felt upon the face, involuntary shudders that announce the presence of something not seen, though its approach is felt in the darkness.

Beatriz, stiffening with fear, yet trembling, thrust her head out from the bed-curtains and listened a moment. She heard a thousand diverse noises; she passed her hand across her brow and listened again; nothing, silence. She saw, with that dilation of the pupils common in nervous crises, dim shapes moving hither and thither all about the room, but when she fixed her gaze on any one point, there was nothing but darkness and impenetrable shadows.

"Bah!" she exclaimed, again resting her beautiful head upon her blue satin pillow, "am I as timid as these poor kinsfolk of mine, whose hearts thump with terror under their armor when they hear a ghost story?"

And closing her eyes she tried to sleep... But her effort to compose herself was in vain. Soon she started up again, paler, more uneasy, more terrified. This time it was no illusion; the bro-

cade hangings of the door had rustled as they were pushed to either side, and slow footsteps were heard upon the carpet; the sound of those footsteps was muffled, almost imperceptible, but continuous, and she heard keeping measure with them, a creaking as of dry wood or bones. And the footfalls came nearer, nearer, the prayer-stool by the side of her bed moved. Beatriz uttered a sharp cry, and burying herself under the bedclothes, hid her head and held her breath.

The wind beat against the balcony glass; the water of the far-off fountain was falling, falling, with a monotonous, neverending sound; the barking of the dogs was borne upon the gusts, and the church bells in the city of Soria, some near, some remote, tolled sadly for the souls of the dead.

So passed an hour, two, the night, a century, for the night seemed eternal to Beatriz. Finally the day began to break; putting fear from her, she half opened her eyes to the first rays of dawn. How beautiful, after a night of insomnia and terrors, is the clear white light of day! She parted the silken curtains of her bed and was ready to laugh at her past alarms, when suddenly a cold sweat covered her body, her eyes seemed starting from their sockets, and a deadly pallor overspread her cheeks; for on her prayer-stool she had seen, torn and blood-stained, the blue scarf she lost on the mountain, the blue scarf Alonso went to seek.

When her attendants rushed in, aghast, to tell her of the death of the heir of Alcudiel, whose body, partly devoured by wolves, had been found that morning among the brambles on Spirit Mountain, they discovered her motionless, convulsed, clinging with both hands to one of the ebony bed-posts, her eyes staring, her mouth open, the lips white, her limbs rigid – dead, dead from horror.

IV

They say that, some time after this event, a hunter who, having lost his way, had been obliged to pass All Souls' Night on Spirit Mountain, and who the next day, before he died, was able to relate the terrible things he had seen. Among the awful sights, he avowed he beheld the skeletons of the ancient Knights Templar and the nobles of Soria, buried in the cloister of the chapel, rise at the hour of the Angelus with a horrible rattle and, mounted on their bony steeds, chase, as a wild animal, a beautiful woman, pallid, with disheveled hair, who, screeching out cries of horror, had been wandering, with bare and bloody feet, about the tomb of Alonso.



Photo Right: Porto, Portugal
© Zacarias Pereira da Mata

Night Walker



For the night walker, there is an aliveness that tantalizes. Leaving behind the electronic gadgetry of an unwanted age back in his constricting apartment, the night walker proceeds into the darkness down alleys and deserted streets, attuned to mystery and on watch for seductions from which there could be no end or return.

For the uninitiated, a trip back in time.... The late 1950s/early 1960s.... A golden age of Gothic Horror cinema had spread about the world: England, Italy, Mexico, the United States (with Corman's Poes) were vibrant with the thrilling and delicious charms of old castles, creepy dungeons, insane lords and bewitching women. During those days if Christopher Lee was a King of Horror, then Barbara Steele was the Queen. Unlike Lee, who had to contend with Peter Cushing and Vincent Price in the Horror King sweepstakes, Steele had no competitors, reigning unchallenged until she abdicated her crown in the late 1960s by marrying and moving with her husband to the United States, and considerably lessening her film work.

Steele made other films besides horror, of course—comedies, dramas, historical romances, and even had a turn with Federico Fellini in *8 1/2*. But it was the fantastique, films like *BLACK SUNDAY*, *NIGHTMARE CASTLE*, *CASTLE OF BLOOD*, *THE HORRIBLE DR. HICCOCK*, and its sequel, *THE GHOST*, that made an indelible impression upon audiences and created an enduring fan base for the actress.

What a presence—and what a face! There was mystery and wildness in her large eyes. A wide mouth that devoured the heart and soul. And there was more: A skeletal bone structure that exuded the supple sensuality of a cat. Expressive long fingers that could curl with cruelty or disdain. For fantastique, Barbara Steele was the perfect succubus: dangerous, alluring, out of reach of mortal man.

Last year saw the release of several Barbara Steele films on DVD here in the States, either making their first NTSC appearance or their first authorized presentation. Two stood out in showcasing Steele's mesmerizing face and its transformations—*THE MANIACS* (Italian title: *I MANIACI*) and *AN ANGEL FOR SATAN* (Italian title: *UN ANGELO PER SATANA*).

THE MANIACS (1964) is the work of a pre-horror Lucio Fulci. Despite the title, the film is not a horror or some slasher mystery, but a loving and at times wickedly amusing look at Italians and Italian society of the time, presented in a series of segments, some as short as a few minutes. Steele appears in two segments—"The Hobby" and "The Bill of Exchange"—in roles in which she reveals talents that casual fans would not be familiar with. Seeing her in *THE MANIACS*, I wonder how casting directors could have passed her by for Diana Rigg's replacement on TV's *THE AVENGERS*. Steele would have been a knockout.

The DVD release of this title from Mya passed under the radar of most horror fans, but it is certainly a worthy acquisition for those who are fascinated by this actress or who just love Italy and the people of Italy. A welcomed consequence of seeing this film is that you'll want to explore more of Steele's non-horror roles and consider her from a different perspective than just as a horror queen.

One of Steele's best films emerged on DVD from Midnight Choir, a West Coast company headed by Johnny Legend. As with other euro-horror releases from Legend, *AN ANGEL FOR SATAN* (1966) is not authorized, in this case a dupe of the French release (bought from Xploited Cinema, according to my trusted sources), with English subtitles added. Because of its unauthorized status, it is difficult to whole-heartedly endorse this DVD, but currently it's the only available NTSC DVD of this title in the United States. The sin of buying an unauthorized release will be forgiven, in part, because the film is a masterwork and Steele is perfection in it. This film needs to be in your library. However you get it.

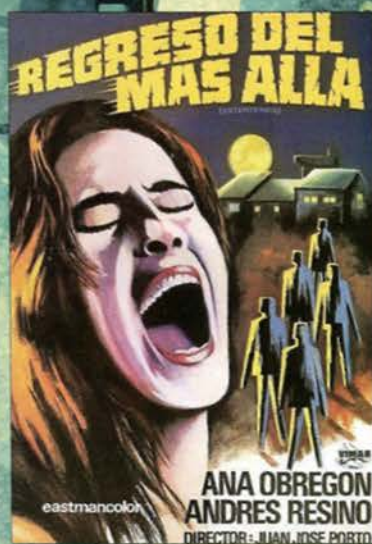
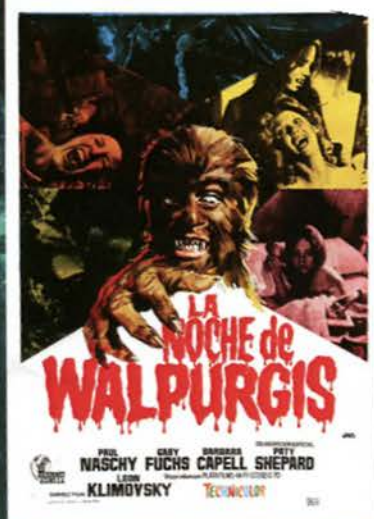
For this pictorial of Barbara Steele's varied and wonderful expressions, we've selected these two films as prime examples of her uniqueness and strength.



All screen captures from *AN ANGEL FOR SATAN* except, from left to right/top to bottom, captures 4, 6, 7, 9, which are from *THE MANIACS*.

The mesmerizing & provocative
Many faces of Steele







The ANDRES RESINO Interview

by Mirek Lipinski

Spanish horror fans are very familiar with the face. Aside from numerous roles in film, on television and in theater, Andres Resino acted in three Spanish cult films—*La noche de Walpurgis* (*Werewolf Shadow*), *Jack el destripador de Londres* (*7 Murders for Scotland Yard*) and *La mansión de la niebla* (*Murder Mansion*). His good looks and smooth, cool guy manner made him stand out from other actors who took on similar roles. For a forthcoming book on the Golden Age of Spanish Horror, I interviewed Andres Resino via e-mail, though the courtesy of his contact person, Jesus. Mr. Resino's lengthy and fascinating responses exceeded my expectations, and I'm most grateful for his time and willingness to go down memory lane. (Note: This interview was conducted before Naschy's death in November, 2009.)

How did you get involved in acting?

In 1960 I was studying political science and economics at the university, but I didn't go beyond the first semester. Being that I was born for acting, I passed only three subjects. I saw an announcement in the papers that said that entrance exams were going to be held for the Instituto de Investigaciones y Experiencias Cinematográficas. The entrance exam was really wonderful. One had to recite dialog before a jury formed by Gustavo Perez Puig, Ana Mariscal, Fernando Fernandez de Cordoba, Jesus Torredesillas... and there was also a test before the cameras. I remember there were about thirty applicants and only ten of us made it. I studied at the Instituto for two years, and then I enrolled in the Real Conservatorio de Arte Dramático, where I studied for another year.

Unless my information is incorrect, one of your first films was a western directed by Leon Klimovsky.

No, the only film I worked on with Leon Klimovsky was *LA NOCHE DE WALPURGIS*. Klimovsky made some westerns, and I made one in Italy that was titled *DEJA EL HUESO QUE VIENEN LOS NUESTROS*

and another in Spain, *LA COLERA DEL VIENTO* (US title: *TRINITY SEES RED* - M.L.). But we only worked together on *LA NOCHE DE WALPURGIS*.

How did you get the role of Marcel in *LA NOCHE DE WALPURGIS*? Did you have to do a screen test?

No, I didn't do any screen tests. I was called directly by Paul Naschy, who was one of the producers.* And when Klimovsky saw me, he felt I was right for the role.

LA NOCHE DE WALPURGIS was filmed with the actors and actresses speaking in English. Did you speak in phonetic English or in Castilian?

Yes, I spoke phonetic English, despite not having any idea of what I was saying. I still remember that I had to say a long paragraph that began this way: "Down in the village I speak to some people..." It's very difficult to film this way because when you don't know what you are exactly saying you cannot interpret the line, although Klimovsky explained to me what I was supposed to be saying. I memorized the dialog by heart, and then they dubbed me so that my lip move-

ments coincided more or less. For the chicas it was not a problem because they were German and they spoke English perfectly. The only person who didn't speak English in the movie was Paul Naschy. He was the main character and the producer and did what he wanted. He spoke his lines in Spanish and then they dubbed him.

This was your first horror film. Were you a fan of the genre?

I have always been fascinated by horror cinema. I remember that when I was younger I had nightmares after watching movies like *DRACULA* and *THE WOLF MAN*. I liked those kind of films a lot. But I didn't eagerly seek out to make horror films. I made the films that I was offered because at that time I was not in a favorable position of choosing many of my roles.

Though I like the genre, it is necessary to make a horror film very well, otherwise it can produce hilarity and be ridiculous. I remember that at the premiere of *LA NOCHE DE WALPURGIS* people laughed and applauded when they saw me get out of the Mercedes because I was the good guy who ended up saving the

*Intriguing statement, as Naschy has never been listed as a producer of this film. Naschy's involvement in many of his films has always been intense, to the point where he could be considered almost as a producer, and certainly as a mover and shaker, contacting key personnel and motivating the entire production. It's not improbable, however, that he had some financial stake in the film.

situation, and that broke all the tension.

In those days horror movies did not have the reputation as they do now. Nowadays they are studied, collected on DVD, and much is written about them. But at that time, many horror movies were not well thought of. Did you have any concerns about working in these type of films?

Indeed they were not well thought of. These films were made in 20-25 days, and not much care was taken with them. When I saw PSYCHO I was amazed by the shots, the dialog, the acting. However in Spain one didn't work this way. Fortunately now horror films are better made and not just in our country. Much has been learned about taking care of details and atmosphere. No, I don't suppose that making these type of films was a problem for me. It was good for me to participate in these movies because I could work as an actor and learn my craft, and they were a means of survival.

What was the atmosphere like during the filming? And what is your opinion of Klimovsky as a director?

Klimovsky was a great professional; he was a man who knew a lot about film. But he was not a director who took much time with actors; he was more concerned with technique, setting up the shots, the lighting, but not so much the acting. I would have liked to have had some more specific instructions from him. But he was a very nice, a very pleasant man, and a joker. On film shoots, unless you have conflicts with an actor, they tend to be fun.

LA NOCHE DE WALPURGIS was very successful in Spain and was sold to many countries around the world. Were you surprised by the success of this movie?

Yes, I was greatly surprised because that movie was made very cheaply. It was filmed in three weeks and was put in an important theater in Madrid for one week so that it could cover an empty slot in the theater's schedule, and in the end it was there for three or four months. I remember that nobody gave five pesetas for her, except for its scriptwriter and creator, Paul Naschy. And the truth is that with the advance of time, it has become a cult movie, and that whenever one speaks of horror cinema, LA NOCHE DE WALPURGIS is mentioned. Paul Naschy has made many more horror movies, and I have worked with him on other films, but the one that is always spoken about is LA NOCHE DE WALPURGIS.

There is a scene in LA NOCHE DE WALPURGIS that has only been included recently in the version for DVD. It is a dialog scene between you and the mayor of the town, but it was never dubbed into English, nor did it show up until recent DVD releases.

They gave me the dialog to that scene the same morning we were going to film it. The entire dialog was in English, and while they were putting make-up on us and setting up the lights, I memorized it. That

scene was filmed later, after we had finished the main shoot. We left one weekend to a chalet in the mountain, and we finished it. But I don't remember if they included it or not in the version for the theaters. It's been many years since I've seen the film.

Did Leon Klimovsky direct the entire movie? I know that Carlos Aured was the assistant director. Did Aured do any substantial work on the film?

Yes, it was Klimovsky who directed the movie. Aured was around a lot but he didn't film anything major.

You also worked in another movie with Naschy that year, JACK EL DESTRIADOR DE LONDRES, under the direction Jose Luis Madrid. How was it to work on that film?

Great, it was great. Besides, I was Jack, a role that any actor would want to play. The movie was filmed in Madrid and in studios in Barcelona. It did

On Werewolf Shadow: "It was filmed in three weeks and was put in an important theater in Madrid for one week so that it could cover an empty slot in the theater's schedule, and in the end it was there for three or four months."

well, although the premiere was not like that of LA NOCHE DE WALPURGIS, by no means. But I was very pleased because I was the bad guy and I liked my acting in it a lot. I also modestly believe that my work was better than that of Naschy. It is a movie that I have not seen again and I would like to see once more.

What about the director, Jose Luis Madrid?

I believe that Jose Luis Madrid has already passed away. When we worked on that film he was delighted with me and told me that we would work together again, but he disappeared off the map and I never saw him again. Until about 10 years ago, when he called me to tell me that he had a very important movie with Sharon Stone and Alain Delon's son, and that he had a role for me, but after that I never heard from him again.

How did you prepare for your role as this legendary serial killer?

I must have a streak of the sadistic in me because these roles are very suited for me. [Laughs.] In truth, I didn't do anything special. I read the script, I thought about it, I studied it and reflected on it as best as I could. I also was not directed in a very specific way. I arrived with my dialog memorized, said what I needed to say and did everything I needed to do.

During that time in Spain, a considerable number of horror movies were filmed in double versions—one that would contain scenes of nudity for export, and another for the Spanish public in which there would be scenes without nudity. Do you remember if JACK EL DESTRIADOR this way was filmed?

Yes, there were some scenes with nudity, especially with Paul Naschy. In LA NOCHE DE WALPURGIS there were also nude scenes for the export version, but here in Spain we didn't see them.

Were you playing the murderer in the scenes where his identity was hidden or was a double used for those scenes?

It was me the entire time.

Was this movie also filmed in English with the actors speaking phonetic English? Or did you speak in Castilian?

No, everything was shot in Castilian, and then later, I would assume, dubbed into English.

LA MANSION DE LA NIEBLA is a very good atmospheric movie that's developing a cult reputation. Were all the foggy scenes around the house filmed in a studio? What about the sequence in the underground?

We had some location shooting, but most of the movie was filmed in some very good studios in Madrid, with sets decorated as an underground, and a lot of fog.

Did you have to learn how to ride a motorcycle for this movie or did you already know how?

I already knew how to ride motorcycles but there was a very dangerous scene in which I was pursued by a car and for that they had to double for me.

This was Lara Polop's first film as director. How would you evaluate his work?

This was his first film and he was also head of production; it was also the first film for which I was paid well. He got lost once in a while. For example, there is a scene in which I have to kick a character in the face, and Polop didn't know how to film this scene. The other actor, who was very good-natured, told me: "Give me a kick with all your force!" But I remembered a scene that I filmed in LA COLERA DEL VIENTO, in which the main character nails a knife between my fingers. That scene was filmed by rotating the camera in reverse, so you began to film the knife separating from the hand. So that when the film ran, it gave one the necessary impression. So I suggested to Polop that we do the same thing with the scene with the kick. Of his later films, I would say that they are not bad. I have followed some of his movies, although he changed genres and it didn't work out that well for him. Unfortunately, he has also passed away.

I know that in EL GRAN AMOR DEL CONDE DRACULA, in which Naschy worked with Polop, the artificial fog made several people make sick.

Was there a similar problem with THE MANSION OF THE FOG?

No, absolutely not. One day Analia Gade coughed a little, but it wasn't anything serious.

Was there a double version of this movie?

No, because the Italian actress [Evelyn Stewart-M.L.] refused to get naked; they wanted her to do it, but she refused.

Any interesting anecdotes when working on this film?

The Italian actress was painfully shy. One day we were eating and she didn't like anything that catering had brought, so she began to eat off her Italian partner's plate. This is getting tired, he shouted angrily at her and gave her the whole plate. And the poor girl was so shy that she stopped eating. And one day another Italian actor let out a fart and tried to hide the fact with great seriousness. We all begin to laugh and the director had to cut then, screaming at us why were we laughing if it was a dramatic scene.

During this time were you offered roles in other horror movies?

No, what happened was that for a while I spent more time in the theater. And if I were offered some film role, although none of horror, I would have been unable to accept because of my involvement in the theater.

You worked for Jess Franco in LOS AMANTES DE LA ISLA DEL DIABLO/DEVIL'S ISLAND LOVERS. How did you get involved in this project?

I received a hasty call from Portugal because some foreign actor who was to play the part of Raymond had failed to show up. That movie was filmed in Lisbon and in Alicante. They didn't make me do a screen test or anything like that; they just called me at night and the following day I was there. We filmed in some palaces of Lisbon and in the palm groves of Alicante for the scene where the girl and I escape. It's not a movie I'm particularly satisfied with. I've forgotten most of the film and haven't seen it again. But it was a good and pleasant experience.

Franco is known to film with a very short and generally improvised script. Was it this way in this movie?

Absolutely. Almost right up to the time when the camera rolled, he was changing the script. He wrote on the run, so that we had to memorize our lines in a minute. It was very difficult to film this way. But he's a sage and a bohemian. He would sometimes come up with one thing and

in five minutes another; he never knew what he would do the following day.

Some people say that Franco is too impulsive and that he sometimes works too quickly, taking advantage of inspirational bursts. What is your evaluation of this director?

It is true that he sometimes works following impulsive bursts of creativity, and sometimes it comes out well and other times badly. Jess has made some very good movies and others that are not so good. But it's also true that geniuses have an inspirational moment and they do stupendous things, and at other times they think over things a lot and make something that's real crap.

You were married to Eva Leon. She also worked with Naschy and Franco, but the two of you never worked together in the same films. Was there any reason for this?

She made something with Franco, but I didn't know she had worked with Naschy. No, there was simply no occasion for us to work together, nothing more. There must have been no role for me in those movies or I was occupied in other things.

You also made movies in Italy. Did you attempt to work in other countries? Germany? England? Possibly the United States? Or was language a barrier?

An agent saw LA COLERA DEL VIENTO, which was a coproduction between Italy and Spain, and wanted to take me to Italy. I was there two years and although I spoke the language well, I met with the problem that Spain didn't belong to the Common Market. I was 30 years old at the time and although I did very well in screen tests and in photo shots, Italian producers had problems with me when they found out that I was Spanish. I did make an Italian-French-German coproduction that was titled THE STING, but it had nothing to do with the Robert Redford and Paul Newman film. I had the role of a mysterious person who turns out to be a policeman who uncovers the plot at the end. My participation in that movie was thanks to the producer who bribed the officials a little so that they allowed me to work.

BLACK JACK has an interesting cast. Peter Cushing, Hugo Stiglitz. Also, Julian Ugarte was in the movie. Did you know him personally? I know that had a tragic life and was murdered, I believe, when leaving the restaurant he owned. But I am not sure of the details. There was also a nasty divorce with Didi Sherman.

All those people were fun and very pleasant. Julian Ugarte was an educated lad. I know that he was married to Didi Sherman, and that she then married Valerio Lazarov. I knew that Ugarte had died, but I didn't know anything about him being murdered. During filming, he was a very elegant and proper person. The filming was great. The

movie was shot in Santander, and it was there that I met my current wife. I remember that year, 1981, with a lot of affection. Those were marvelous days, everybody spoiled us.

The director, Max H. Boulois, is a bit of mystery. I hardly know anything about him. You figure in two of his movies. Could you tell me something about him?

The director was Max Boulois and he was originally from Martinique. He was a journalist and participated in an Olympics, in the javelin category, I believe. He reported on the Olympics and finally opted to make films. BLACK JACK was his first movie. He was black and married to a white Spaniard. He was very nice but has disappeared off the face of the earth, but, if anywhere, I believe that he will be in Paris or in Martinique. Apparently he had problems in financing his movies, and in my opinion that is what made him disappear. I don't know what he would be doing now. BLACK JACK opened and it didn't do badly. I made another movie with Boulois—OTHELLO. Some scenes were filmed in Martinique; we were there one week. Tony Curtis worked on that movie and he drank a lot. And I remember one night we were in the hotel, which was fantastic with gorgeous gardens. Nobody knew where Tony was and then when we found him, he was completely drunk. My friend and I had to carry him between us. When we were going by the terrace of the restaurant he realized where he was, lifted his head and greeted people as if nothing were wrong. When we arrived to his room, he fell on the bed and the following day he no longer remembered anything that had happened that night.

I have not seen REGRESO DEL MAS ALLA/RETURN FROM THE BEYOND, although I know something of the movie. What is your opinion on this film and its director and Juan Jose Porto?

Juan Jose Porto is good director, although he is more of a journalist. He hasn't had any real success in cinema, however, nor has he done anything remarkable in that realm.

REGRESO DEL MAS ALLA was disastrous; in fact, it never had a premiere. The film was shot in Granada; that's where the producers were, and they didn't pay us. It's a movie from 1981, and I still have not received anything for it. There was a trial, but the company was declared insolvent, so I will never get anything. I remember that Ana Obregon, who had obtained permission of the Actors Studio in New York to appear in the film, had many theories on the interpretation of her role. And each day in the hotel, she would come to talk with me about the script. I



helped out for educational purposes, but on the third day I told her that she should just memorize her lines and not worry so much because for sure the movie won't open because the script was horrible. She was puzzled and asked me, therefore, why I was doing the film. I told her that at the time I didn't have any other offers and was short on money, and that if I went there for one month with all expenses paid with luck I could charge something. She took all this very badly at first because she thought that the film would be the movie of the year. But when we began to see the rushes, she herself realized that the film would never open in a theater. I have a terrible memory of that movie because of those crooked producers.

You also worked with Naschy later in LOS CANTABROS/THE CANTABRIANS. This movie was to have been directed originally by Amando de Ossorio. When you signed on for the movie was the director Ossorio or was it Naschy?
It was Naschy, I never met Ossorio.

Are there some interesting anecdotes or experiences of working in this movie?
It was very curious because Naschy never memorized his lines as he was always very busy planning out things and doing this and that, so he used a human prompter when he needed to speak. So one had to wait till the prompter spoke first and then Naschy. This affects the other actor, but okay, if Naschy didn't memorize the dialog it is because he was very busy with the production and negotiating things. It is something that I reproach him for but forgive him because

he had so many other things to do on that film.

You worked with Paul Naschy as actor in three movies and in a you were directed by him in one. What is your opinion of the man as an actor, director and character?

Paul Naschy is a wonderful person, but in my opinion he has one problem. He loves the cinema and knows a lot, but his acting is a little limited. He has made horror films in a masterful way, but when making another type of cinema he doesn't have the same ease. But he is forgiven because he is very professional and replaces his limitation with a lot of professionalism. And as director he has made things that are very good and which have made him recognized, but always in other countries, not in Spain. Rather in Japan, the United States and Germany.

What horror film do you consider the best?

It's difficult to choose but I like PSYCHO a lot, and the one that Gregory Peck made, CAPE FEAR. THE EXORCIST impressed me when I saw it. I remember that I was very young and at that time I lived alone, so that I walked down the street at night in fear after I saw that film. I find Amenabar's THE OTHER brilliant. Those are the horror films that I would have liked to have made, not the domestic films that were quickly done. Of those that I have made, I am very satisfied of my work in JACK EL DESTRIADOR DE LONDRES.

You have worked in cinema, television and the theater. What experience do you find more artis-

tically gratifying? What have you done recently?
Without any doubt, the theater. The theater is life. It gives you the opportunity to perfect and improve upon each performance. Film doesn't give you that option once it has been shot.

Right now I have just finished a short film. They treated me phenomenally, as if I were Paul Newman or Robert Redford. The director is a very young girl, the story is very beautiful, so I have attached myself to the project with a lot of hope and without getting paid anything, either. And there is also a theatrical play that is getting ready. It's a wonderful play titled DANGEROUS CORNER. And there we are...waiting to begin the rehearsals....



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